



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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Hillsdale College Recognizes Outstanding Alumni During Awards Banquet

Award recipients were Dr. Nicholas Rorick, The Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Association, Dr. Karen Liby, and Duane 'Dutch' Van Fleet.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Hillsdale College announced its 2026 Alumni Award recipients on June 27 at the Alumni Awards Banquet during Red, White & Blue Weekend, a patriotic spin on the College's annual alumni reunion. Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn presented the awards.

"Hillsdale graduates serve their country, lead in their communities, and defend the principles that allow America to flourish," said David Stanton, executive director of Alumni Relations at Hillsdale College. "These awards recognize achievements by alumni in a variety of fields who exemplify the spirit of Hillsdale College."

Dr. Nicholas Rorick '01 received a Distinguished Alumnus Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dentistry. Dr. Rorick has his own dental practice, Sycamore Hills Dentistry, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. After earning his Bachelor of Science in biology from Hillsdale College, he completed his Ph.D. in genetics at the University of Iowa. He later graduated from the Indiana University School of Dentistry and completed an Advanced Education General Dentistry residency and served on active duty with the U.S. Navy. He is currently a member of the Hillsdale College Alumni Association Board.

The Phi Sigma Epsilon Alumni Association received the Tower Award for Service. The fraternity closed its doors on Hillsdale's campus in the late 1980s, but alumni continued to gather on their Hillsdale Street property for more than 40 years for Homecoming and other special events. Beginning in 2016, Phi Sig alumni partnered with the College to build a pavilion on the property, which they donated to the College after helping raise funds for the project. The Phi Sig

Alumni Pavilion, dedicated in 2024, features an indoor kitchen, meeting space, and bathrooms, as well as an outdoor grill, patio, and firepit.

Dr. Karen Liby '94 posthumously received a Distinguished Alumna Award for Outstanding Achievement in Medical Research. Dr. Liby was a professor and cancer researcher at Indiana University. She held nine patents related to tumor prevention. After double-majoring in history and biology at Hillsdale College, Dr. Liby received her Ph.D. in cell and molecular biology from the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine and completed postdoctoral training at Dartmouth Medical School, where she also joined the faculty. She passed away on Nov. 15, 2024.

Duane “Dutch” Van Fleet '73 received the Elizebeth Smith Friedman Freedom Award. Van Fleet joined the U.S. Marines six months prior to his high school graduation and participated in numerous combat patrols and operations in Vietnam. He was wounded during a two-day battle in which 88 Marines held and defeated over 1,500 North Vietnamese regulars. He rejoined his unit, but a second wound ended his combat duties in Vietnam. He then attended Hillsdale College, graduating with honors, and then returned to active duty, becoming a Marine Infantry officer. He participated in combat operations in Liberia, Operation Sharp Edge, Saudi Arabia/Kuwait, Operation Desert Shield, and Operation Desert Storm. He later served as a military planner/advisor to U.S. embassies in the Far East and Levant. He was awarded the Combat Action Ribbon three times. He was also awarded the Bronze Star with Combat V and two Purple Hearts for his service in Vietnam and the Meritorious Service Medal for the successful evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Liberia. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V for actions in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Lieutenant Colonel Van Fleet retired from active duty in 1998 and resides with his wife Gail in Columbia, Mississippi.

For headshots of the award recipients, click [here](#). For photos from the banquet, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 7.5 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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